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1.3 million Australians want to work - but not in the labour force

In September 2010, there were 1.3 million Australians who were not in the labour force but wanted to work according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This group makes up more than one in five (22%) of all people who were not in the labour force.

Amongst them were 102,100 discouraged job seekers. These are people who wanted to work and were also available to start work in the next four weeks, but were not actively looking for a job because they believed they would not find one.

The most common reason discouraged job seekers gave for not actively looking for work was because they believed they were considered too old by employers (38%). Over half of all discouraged job seekers were aged 55 years and over. Over half the discouraged job seekers said that they intend to, or might, enter the labour force in the next year.

There were also 748,900 people not in the labour force who wanted to work, but were not actively looking for work because of personal, family or other reasons. The most common reason men in this group were not looking for work was because they were 'attending an educational institution' (37%), while women in this group most commonly said they were not looking for work because they were 'caring for children' (34%).

Further details can be found in *Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 2010* (cat. no. 6220.0).

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